

COVER SHEET

FINAL

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK

KEWEENAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Responsible Agency: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

The approving official is the National Park Service's Regional Director for the Midwest Region. A "Record of Decision" can be issued 30 days after publication of release of the document by the Environmental Protection Agency in the *Federal Register*. The National Park Service will accept comments on the Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement during this 30-day period. For further information, contact the Superintendent, Isle Royale National Park, 800 East Lakeshore Drive, Houghton, Michigan 49931, (906) 482-0984. Written comments also can be sent to this address.

Abstract: This General Management Plan is intended to provide a foundation for park management and use and to serve as a guide for park programs and for priority setting over at least the next 15-20 years. Five alternatives were developed in the course of preparing the plan. **Alternative A** is the no-action, or status quo, alternative and provides a baseline for comparison of the other four alternatives. **The proposed action** has been revised from the proposal in the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. It is intended to meet the diverse expectations and needs of Isle Royale visitors while emphasizing the natural quiet that is fundamental to wilderness experiences. All park areas would be available to all visitors as long as users participate in ways that are consistent with the access, facilities, and opportunities provided. **Alternative B** would expand facilities and services at the ends of the island and create a more primitive experience toward the center. Cultural resources would be preserved only at the ends of the island. Use limits would be imposed in some zones. Some facilities in developed areas would be expanded to serve visitors preparing to enter the backcountry. **Alternative C** would scale back all development to create a more primitive park. No interpretive media or formal programs would be offered on the island. All cultural resources would be documented and allowed to deteriorate. A narrower range of experiences would be available. Visitor numbers would be lowered and use limits would be instituted islandwide. All concessions and related facilities would be removed. **Alternative D** was modified to become the proposed action. **Alternative E** would allow park management to continue as it is now, but visitor numbers would be controlled and would be low. Historic structures would be preserved according to significance. A variety of uses would continue across the island.

The potential consequences of the actions in the alternatives on natural resources, cultural resources, visitor use and experiences, park operations, and the socioeconomic environment have been evaluated. In general, all alternatives would better protect the park's natural resources than the current management direction (alternative A). Alternative C would provide the greatest benefit to natural resources, but would have the most negative effects on cultural resources and on visitor use. The proposed action and alternative E would best protect cultural resources. Impacts on park operations from the alternatives would be mixed; the workload would remain roughly the same (except in alternative C, where it would be reduced), but the emphasis would change depending on the alternative. The alternatives would not appreciably affect the socioeconomic environment.